Issuing of multi-entry visa

†2453. SHRI UDAY PRATAP SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are contemplating on issuing multi-entry visa for five years for foreign tourists and traders; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the specified terms for issuing visa?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) Yes.

(b) The Government has decided to grant multi-entry visas of five years duration for tourism to nationals of 18 countries namely France, Germany, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Belgium, Finland, Spain, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland, New Zealand, Japan, South Korea, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico and Vietnam. Tourist on this visa can stay in India for 90 days on each visit. Necessary instructions to this effect are being issued to all our Missions/Posts abroad.

Multiple entry business visa up to five years are already being issued to traders and businessmen who can furnish documentary evidence of conducting business or to explore possibilities of setting up business venture in India. This visa is issued with this stipulation that stay in India during each visit shall not exceed 180 days.

Reimbursement for peace missions by UN

2454. SHRI MOTIUR RAHMAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have to recover $ 180.55 million from United Nations (UN) towards reimbursement for peace missions;

(b) if so, the reasons for UN holding back reimbursement and efforts made to recover the same from UN; and

(c) the details of Indian troops serving in peace mission of the UN and the number of Indian soldiers that were killed during the last three years while serving in peace missions?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) The Government have to recover an amount of US $ 147.516 million from the United Nations towards reimbursement, as on October 31, 2006, for India's deployment in UN peacekeeping missions.

(b) The delay in making payments to India and other troop contributing countries is mainly due to some member withholding or delaying their mandatory financial contribution to the United Nations. The Government continues to actively follow up this matter with UN authorities as well as other member state. The Government had also raised this issue in the UN General Assembly and its Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

(c) As on 30 November, 2006, a total of 9256 Indian personnel were serving in various UN peackeeping mission including 8825 troops, 88 military observers and 343 police official. During the last three years, two Indian soldiers were killed in action while serving in UN peacekeeping missions.

Balancing the interests of Nation

†2455. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the final approval by the Upper House of U.S. Senate to Indo-US civil nuclear agreement, atomic test conducted by North Korea recently and deteriorating balance in Asia are against the interest of the country; and

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) The India-US nuclear understanding as contained in the July 18, 2005 India-US Joint Statement and the March 2, 2006 Separation Plan will help in addressing India's growing energy requirements. India has expressed its concerns about the North Korean nuclear test through a statement by our Officials Spokesperson on October 9, 2006. There is growing appreaction of India's contribution to Asian and global security, which actually advances the interests of the country.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.